

The meeting will focus on operational and research activities and will be open to the public. Due to time constraints, the public will not be able to participate in the Committee's discussions. However, written statements concerning meeting topics may be filed with the Committee before or after the meeting by sending them to Mr. Martin Mendoza at the address listed under **FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT**, or may be filed at the meeting. Please refer to Docket No. 99-058-1 when submitting your statements.

This notice of meeting is given pursuant to section 10 of the Federal Advisory Committee Act.

Done in Washington, DC, this 4th day of August 1999.

Bobby R. Acord,

Acting Administrator, Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service.

[FR Doc. 99-20443 Filed 8-6-99; 8:45 am]

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DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Forest Service

Forestwide Noxious Weed Control, EIS, Beaverhead-Deerlodge National Forest, Beaverhead, Madison, Jefferson, Silver Bow, Granite, and Powell Counties, MT

AGENCY: Forest Service, USDA.

ACTION: Notice; intent to prepare environmental impact statement.

SUMMARY: The Forest Service will prepare an environmental impact statement to document the analysis and disclose the environmental impacts of mechanical, manual, biological, ground-based chemical, and aerial chemical noxious weed control methods across the Beaverhead-Deerlodge National Forest.

The proposed action authorizes treatment of 37,762 acres; 15,082 acres by aerial application of chemicals, 22,640 acres by ground-based application of chemicals, 34 acres by biological methods, and 6.6 acres by mechanical methods. The objectives of the proposal are to: Protect the biodiversity of the Beaverhead-Deerlodge National Forest by preventing or limiting the spread of noxious weeds; eliminate new invaders before they become established; reduce known and potential weed seed sources; prevent or limit the spread of established weeds into areas containing little or no infestation; and protect sensitive and unique habitats.

DATES: Initial comments concerning the scope of the analysis should be received

in writing no later than September 15, 1999.

ADDRESSES: The responsible official is Mike Paterni, acting Forest Supervisor, Beaverhead-Deerlodge National Forest, 420 Barrett Street, Dillon, MT 59725. Send written comments to the responsible official.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Diane Petroni, Interdisciplinary Team Leader, also at the Supervisor's Office in Dillon, or phone: (406) 683-3900.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: Aerial application of herbicides would be authorized to treat about 40% of the identified infestations. An integration approach would be used to treat all infestations, including biological, mechanical, and ground-based chemical control methods. New infestations would be evaluated to determine if the site fits within the scope of the EIS and then prioritized for treatment. Sites selected for control would be treated using the parameters established and the analysis conducted in this EIS. Treatment of additional sites would be based on a site type stratification process which defined each site by landscape position, soil type and depth, habitat type or community, slope, and aspect. Pretreatment surveys would be conducted to determine management objectives for the site, special considerations (sensitive plants, presence of live water, threatened and sensitive fish, etc.), recommended treatment methods, and other site-specific information.

The project areas are located throughout the Beaverhead-Deerlodge National Forest. The scope of this proposal is limited to noxious weed control measures on known infestations and new infestations as they are identified, and related mitigation requirements within the Beaverhead-Deerlodge National Forest.

Public participation is important to this analysis. Part of the goal of public involvement is to identify additional issues and to refine the general, tentative issues. A scoping notice describing the project was mailed to those who requested information about noxious weed control on the Beaverhead-Deerlodge National Forest. Coordination with Montana Department of Environmental Quality/Water Quality Division will occur regarding effects to water quality. The United States Fish and Wildlife Service will be consulted concerning effects to threatened and endangered species.

Preliminary issues identified by Forest Service specialists include effects to soils, water quality, and potential public concerns about aerial application

of herbicides. The analysis will consider all reasonably foreseeable activities, including actions on lands adjacent to the National Forest.

People may visit with Forest Service officials at any time during the analysis and prior to the decision. Two periods are specifically designated for comments on the analysis: (1) During the scoping process and (2) during the draft EIS period.

During the scoping process, the Forest Service is seeking additional information and comments from Federal, State and local agencies and other individuals or organizations who may be interested in or affected by the proposed action. The agency invites written comments and suggestions on this action, particularly in terms of identification of issues and alternative development.

The draft EIS should be available for review in May, 2000. The final EIS is scheduled for completion in September, 2000.

The comment period on the draft EIS will be 45 days from the date the Environmental Protection Agency publishes the notice of availability in the **Federal Register**.

To assist the Forest Service in identifying and considering issues and concerns on the proposed action, comments on the draft environmental impact statement should be as specific as possible. It is also helpful if comments refer to specific pages or chapters of the draft statement. Comments may also address the adequacy of the draft environmental impact statement or the merits of the alternatives formulated and discussed in the statement. Reviewers may wish to refer to the Council on Environmental Quality Regulations for implementing the procedural provisions of the National Environmental Policy Act at CFR 1503.3 in addressing these points.

The responsible official will make the decision on this proposal after considering comments and responses, environmental consequences discussed in the final EIS, and applicable laws, regulations, and policies. The decision and reasons for the decision will be document in a Record of Decision.

Dated: July 30, 1999.

Mike Paterni,

Acting Forest Supervisor.

[FR Doc. 99-20438 Filed 8-6-99; 8:45 am]

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